



UMBC

*Alumni*  
**Awards**  
— 2025

**WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 29**

Chesapeake Employers Insurance Arena

## WELCOME

Welcome to the 2025 UMBC Alumni Awards! Tonight, the Alumni Association Board of Directors is honored and excited to celebrate the extraordinary achievements of our university community. In addition to hosting our signature event in the stunning Chesapeake Employers Insurance Arena, we are delighted to share this special evening with those who could not attend in person through our livestream.

This year, we recognize remarkable alumni who represent a diverse range of disciplines. The inspiring awardees include five outstanding Alumni of the Year, a Rising Star alumna, a Distinguished Service alumnus, an Outstanding Faculty member, and an Outstanding Staff member. These honorees exemplify the innovative spirit and excellence that defines UMBC.

I would like to personally thank the Alumni Awards Committee, along with the steadfast support of the Alumni Engagement team, whose tireless efforts have made this celebration possible.

With a community of over 100,000 amazing alumni, we honor and celebrate these exceptional individuals!



Nate Dissmeyer '07  
*President, UMBC Alumni Association Board of Directors*

As a proud member of the UMBC community, it's an honor to be part of this celebration. Tonight, we join the Alumni Association Board of Directors in recognizing nine remarkable individuals whose lives and work embody the very best of UMBC. Their accomplishments remind us that a UMBC education is not just time spent on campus; it is a lifelong journey of learning, leading, and inspiring others.

Their stories reflect the true Retriever spirit, and I hope they inspire you as much as they've inspired me. Thank you for joining us, in person or virtually, as we celebrate these extraordinary award winners and the enduring power of the UMBC community.



Stanyell Bruce  
*Director, Office of Alumni Engagement*

## PROGRAM

### Welcome

**Nate Dissmeyer '07**  
PRESIDENT, UMBC ALUMNI ASSOCIATION  
BOARD OF DIRECTORS

**Zoscha Bomhardt '93**  
CO-CHAIR, ALUMNI AWARDS COMMITTEE,  
UMBC ALUMNI ASSOCIATION BOARD  
OF DIRECTORS

**Patrick Roche**  
VICE PRESIDENT, OFFICE OF  
INSTITUTIONAL ADVANCEMENT

### Seated Dinner

### Presentation of Awards

### Outstanding Alumni

**Emily Brown '14, M.S. '14**  
COMPUTER SCIENCE  
Assistant Group Supervisor,  
The Johns Hopkins University Applied  
Physics Laboratory

**Erwin Cabrera '10**  
BIOLOGICAL SCIENCES  
Executive Director,  
The Stony Brook Simons STEM  
Scholars Program

**Johnny Olszewski, Jr., Ph.D. '17,**  
PUBLIC POLICY  
U.S. Representative,  
2nd Congressional District,  
U.S. House of Representatives

**Cameron Slayden '99,**  
INTERDISCIPLINARY STUDIES  
Co-Founder, CEO, and Creative Director,  
Microverse Studios

**Jacqueline Smith '06**  
CHEMISTRY  
Associate Professor of Chemistry,  
Howard University

### Rising Star

**Courtney Culp '20**  
VISUAL ARTS  
Print Designer,  
Warner Bros. Discovery

### Distinguished Service Award

**Mark Benesch '08**  
CHEMICAL ENGINEERING  
Capital Portfolio Director - Americas,  
AstraZeneca

### Outstanding Faculty

**Jamie Gurganus '04, M.S. '11,**  
Ph.D. '20  
MECHANICAL ENGINEERING  
Associate Director of STEM Research,  
Assistant Professor in Engineering and  
Computing Education

### Outstanding Staff

**Michael Hunt '06, Ph.D. '25**  
MATHEMATICS AND LANGUAGE,  
LITERACY, AND CULTURE  
Director of the McNair  
Scholars Program

### Closing Remarks

**Valerie Sheares Ashby**  
PRESIDENT, UMBC

## ALUMNI AWARDS CATEGORIES

### *Outstanding Alumni of the Year*

This award is given to UMBC graduates who have brought distinction to the university through personal and professional achievement. Awards can be presented to alumni from the following colleges and schools: Erickson School of Aging Studies; College of Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences; College of Engineering and Information Technology; College of Natural and Mathematical Sciences; and School of Social Work. All of the honorees are making significant contribution to their fields, and an impact far beyond UMBC. To be considered for this award, the nominee must have:

- Graduated from UMBC no less than five years ago
- Achieved prominence in his or her field
- Ideally, demonstrated involvement and support of UMBC and/or the Alumni Association

### *Distinguished Service Award*

This award is given to a UMBC graduate who has demonstrated dedication to UMBC through exceptional service to UMBC, its students, and alumni. To be considered for this award, the nominee must have:

- Graduated from UMBC no less than two years ago
- Supported UMBC or the Alumni Association through either a single act or a record of service

### *Rising Star Award*

This award is given to an outstanding undergraduate alum of the last decade who has demonstrated professional achievement. To be considered for this award, the nominee must have:

- Graduated from UMBC no more than 10 years ago
- Achieved early career and professional achievement
- Ideally, demonstrated ongoing involvement and support of UMBC, its students, and/or alumni

### *Outstanding Faculty Award*

This award is given to one full-time faculty member to honor extraordinary teaching as demonstrated by the effectiveness in motivating students in ways that have a lasting influence on their lives. The nominee should have a record of commitment to student success, the ability to inspire student interest and enthusiasm, service to the UMBC community, and have constructively impacted and influenced campus life beyond the classroom. To be considered for this award, the nominee must:

- Be a current UMBC faculty member and employed at the university for a minimum of five years
- Be a full-time faculty member (any course instructor who is employed full-time, tenure, or non-tenure track)

### *Outstanding Staff Award*

This award is given to one full-time member of the UMBC staff or administration to honor extraordinary contributions as demonstrated by their significant direct or indirect impact on students and/or alumni. The nominees should have a record of outstanding performance, commitment to the values and mission of UMBC, service to the UMBC community, and positively influencing campus life. To be considered for this award, the nominee must:

- Be a current or former member of the UMBC staff or administration who has been employed at the university for a minimum of five years. Former members of UMBC staff or administration must be within three years of their last date of service to the university. Faculty and less than full-time employees are not eligible for this award. Members of UMBC's Institutional Advancement staff who support alumni engagement and fundraising efforts are not eligible until such time they are no longer involved.

## Outstanding Alumni



**Emily Brown '14, M.S. '14**  
**COMPUTER SCIENCE**

*Assistant Group Supervisor, The Johns Hopkins University Applied Physics Laboratory*

Emily Brown is an assistant group supervisor at the Johns Hopkins University Applied Physics Laboratory (APL), focusing on the development of data analytics to better understand cyber and information operation

threats. In 2023, she was named to Technical.ly's annual Engineers RealLIST, recognizing 15 leading tech innovators, educators, and advocates in the Baltimore tech ecosystem.

A dedicated advocate for women in computing, Brown supports efforts to recruit and retain women in underrepresented technical roles at APL. She recently served on the FUSE team, where she promoted inclusive principles and practices across the organization. Her leadership and mentorship have helped shape strategic initiatives within APL, contributing to positive change across its 8,000-person workforce.

Brown remains deeply engaged with UMBC through the Center for Women in Technology (CWIT), serving as an industry mentor. She has participated in Career Month events, mentored students, and created pathways for UMBC students to intern and work at APL. Her efforts have extended CWIT's reach by encouraging other APL staff to serve as mentors as well. In recognition of her outstanding commitment, she was honored as a CWIT exemplary industry mentor during the 2023 CWIT Community Awards.

Read more about **Emily Brown**.

[umbc.edu/stories/meet-emily-brown-outstanding-alumna](https://umbc.edu/stories/meet-emily-brown-outstanding-alumna)



## Outstanding Alumni



**Erwin Cabrera '10**  
**BIOLOGICAL SCIENCES**

*Executive Director, The Stony Brook Simons STEM Scholars Program*

Dr. Erwin Cabrera is a champion for excellence in STEM, a first-generation college graduate, and an alumnus of UMBC's Meyerhoff Scholars and NIH Maximizing Access to Research Careers programs. He earned his Ph.D.

in neurobiology and neurosciences and currently serves as the inaugural Executive Director of the Simons STEM Scholars Program at Stony Brook University, a \$56.6 million initiative supported by the Simons Foundation and Simons Foundation International. Modeled after the Meyerhoff Scholars Program, the Simons STEM Scholars Program supports high-achieving students from underrepresented backgrounds in pursuing advanced degrees and leadership roles in science and medicine.

Throughout his career, Cabrera has demonstrated a deep commitment to mentorship, equity, and academic success. Prior to joining Stony Brook in 2022, he led the Research Aligned Mentorship (RAM) program at SUNY Farmingdale, where he supported first-generation and low-income students in accessing high-impact research experiences and achieving long-term academic success.

Cabrera has remained closely connected to the UMBC community. He served as president of the Meyerhoff Alumni Advisory Board (MAAB), and under his leadership, co-organized a weekend-long series of networking and community events to celebrate the program's 30th anniversary in 2019. He has also served as a Summer Bridge counselor and alumni advisor to Meyerhoff Scholars, offering guidance and encouragement to future leaders in STEM.



Read more about **Erwin Cabrera**.

[umbc.edu/stories/meyerhoff-alumnus-expanding-umbcs-legacy](https://umbc.edu/stories/meyerhoff-alumnus-expanding-umbcs-legacy)

## Outstanding Alumni



### Johnny Olszewski, Jr., Ph.D. '17 PUBLIC POLICY

*U.S. Representative, 2nd Congressional District,  
U.S. House of Representatives*

Congressman Johnny “Johnny O” Olszewski, Jr. proudly represents Maryland’s 2nd Congressional District, encompassing much of Baltimore County, Carroll County, and key communities within Baltimore City. A lifelong Marylander and first-generation college graduate, he brings a deep

commitment to public service and a proven record of transformative leadership to the U.S. House of Representatives.

Olszewski began his career as a public-school teacher before being elected to the Maryland House of Delegates, where he served for more than nine years and became the youngest lawmaker to chair Baltimore County’s House delegation. During his tenure, he championed earned sick leave, led efforts to raise the minimum wage, and cast a pivotal vote securing marriage equality in Maryland—demonstrating his dedication to fairness and opportunity for all.

Twice elected Baltimore County Executive, Olszewski led Maryland’s third-largest jurisdiction with vision and fiscal responsibility, overseeing a \$5 billion budget and 9,000 employees. His administration delivered historic investments in public education, launched near-universal free community college for residents, and established new standards for transparency through public campaign financing, the Office of the Inspector General, and community budget town halls. His steady leadership during the COVID-19 pandemic and the Francis Scott Key Bridge collapse earned recognition for its compassion and effectiveness.

Elected to Congress in 2025, Olszewski quickly earned a seat on the influential Democratic Steering and Policy Committee and serves on the Small Business and Foreign Affairs Committees. His priorities include addressing the cost-of-living crisis, expanding workforce development, strengthening education and housing access, and protecting the foundations of American democracy.

Read more about **Johnny Olszewski**.

[umbc.edu/stories/freshman-representative-olszewski-in-congress](https://umbc.edu/stories/freshman-representative-olszewski-in-congress)



## Outstanding Alumni



### Cameron Slayden '99 INTERDISCIPLINARY STUDIES

*Co-Founder, CEO, and Creative Director,  
Microverse Studios*

Cameron Slayden is an award-winning scientific animator and the CEO of Microverse, a firm specializing in transforming complex scientific concepts into compelling visual stories. He began his career in 2000 as the primary scientific illustrator for *Science*

magazine, creating illustrations and animations for both its print and digital platforms. He later earned his M.S. in medical illustration, continuing to contribute visuals to *Science* and *Nature* magazines.

In 2005, Slayden co-founded Microverse Studios, which has since produced award-winning animations for major pharmaceutical corporations, universities, biotech startups, and global science media outlets—including Discovery, National Geographic, and the History Channel. His work bridges science and art, advancing public understanding of complex biomedical topics.

For over a decade, Slayden has served as a mentor with the Association of Medical Illustrators, where he is recognized for his leadership in the field. He also lends his experience and expertise to the next generation of scientific communicators as an Assistant Professor in the Medical Illustration Graduate Program at Augusta University and as a Clinical Assistant Professor in the Biomedical Visualization program at the University of Illinois Chicago. Beyond his professional contributions, he is deeply committed to community service—particularly his volunteer work supporting refugees from Congo and Afghanistan as they adapt to life in the United States.

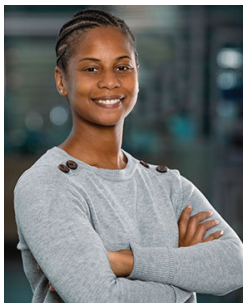
A proud alumnus of UMBC’s Linehan Artist Scholars program, Slayden has supported interdisciplinary students considering careers in medical illustration and has remained actively engaged with the UMBC community. He returned as an alumni speaker for the Linehan Program’s 30th Anniversary celebration in 2024.



Read more about **Cameron Slayden**.

[umbc.edu/stories/meet-cameron-slayden-science-animation](https://umbc.edu/stories/meet-cameron-slayden-science-animation)

## Outstanding Alumni



### Jacqueline Smith '06 CHEMISTRY

*Associate Professor of Chemistry,  
Howard University*

Dr. Jacqueline Smith is a chemist, educator, and a STEM advocate currently serving as an Associate Professor of Chemistry at Howard University. A proud alumna of UMBC's Meyerhoff Scholars Program, she earned her

Ph.D. in chemistry and completed postdoctoral research before launching an impactful academic career.

From 2016 to 2024, Smith served on the faculty at Bowie State University, where she built a successful research program and mentored more than 30 undergraduate and high school students. Her dedication to mentorship and scholarly excellence was recognized with several competitive research grants, including the prestigious National Science Foundation CAREER award.

At Howard University, Dr. Smith continues to advance her research in organic and medicinal chemistry. Her work focuses on the development of small-molecule therapeutics that modulate cell signaling and migration, as well as the design of bioanalytical tools to support drug delivery. Her interdisciplinary approach reflects a commitment to both scientific discovery and real-world impact.

Outside the lab, Smith is helping to broaden participation in STEM. She partners with local schools to enhance K-12 science education and serves as an active member of the National Organization for the Professional Advancement of Black Chemists and Chemical Engineers, promoting equity and excellence in chemical sciences.

Read more about **Jacqueline Smith**.

[umbc.edu/stories/meet-jacqueline-smith-role-model-black-chemists](https://umbc.edu/stories/meet-jacqueline-smith-role-model-black-chemists)



## Rising Star



### Courtney Culp '20 VISUAL ARTS

*Print Designer, Warner Bros. Discovery*

Courtney Culp is an Emmy-Award winning graphic designer at Warner Bros. Discovery in Atlanta, GA, where she develops creative strategy and design for 360-degree marketing campaigns across the NBA, NHL, MLB, and U.S. Soccer and more. Her work blends

her passions for art and athletics, using design to tell stories that connect people through shared cultural experiences. While at UMBC, Culp was both a Linehan Artist Scholar and a four-year member of the Division I Women's Soccer Team.

Culp has received six Sports Emmy nominations and won her first in 2024 for Outstanding Music Direction on NBA on TNT's Opening Night Tease, celebrating 50 years of hip-hop. From her UMBC senior documentary, *A Mile in My Cleats*, exploring experiences of Black women in sports, to her current creative work, she continues to champion design's power to inspire and unite.

A dedicated mentor and volunteer, Culp leads initiatives such as *She Got It* and *ENGAGE* at Warner Bros. Discovery, supporting women in sports and providing creative students with professional access and mentorship. She remains deeply connected to UMBC through the Linehan Artist Scholars Program, serving as a mentor and alumni speaker for its 30th anniversary celebration.



Read more about **Courtney Culp**.

[umbc.edu/stories/rising-star-award-recipient-courtney-culp](https://umbc.edu/stories/rising-star-award-recipient-courtney-culp)

## *Distinguished Service*



### **Mark Benesch '08** **CHEMICAL ENGINEERING**

*Capital Portfolio Director - Americas, AstraZeneca*

Mark Benesch's career spans a wide range of industries, including oil and gas, chemicals, and pharmaceuticals. He currently serves as Senior Director of Capital Projects Portfolio at AstraZeneca, where he oversees more than

\$1 billion in capital projects supporting key therapeutic areas.

A dedicated connector and advocate, Benesch has helped strengthen the UMBC-AstraZeneca partnership. He founded and leads an internal network of UMBC alumni, friends, and family at AstraZeneca, which has grown to more than 130 members. Through his leadership, UMBC has become a Tier 1 partner with AstraZeneca, establishing an early talent pipeline that supports student internships, research collaborations, and career opportunities.

Benesch has championed numerous high-impact engagement initiatives between the two organizations, including AstraZeneca's Gold Sponsorship of UMBC's 2024 AIChE Mid-Atlantic Student Conference. He also led the "Connects Day" recruiting event on campus, organized visits for UMBC students and faculty to tour AstraZeneca's Rockville facilities, and launched the first UMBC Alumni Mixer at AstraZeneca's Gaithersburg headquarters.

Under Benesch's leadership, engagement between UMBC and AstraZeneca has grown—tripling student participation, doubling applicants, and increasing the number of UMBC interns fivefold in one year. His vision for a sustainable, inclusive talent pipeline continues to shape both institutions, advancing science, education, and opportunity for future leaders.

Read more about **Mark Benesch**.

[umbc.edu/stories/mark-benesch-astrazeneca](https://umbc.edu/stories/mark-benesch-astrazeneca)



## *Outstanding Faculty*



### **Jamie Gurganus '04, M.S. '11, Ph.D. '20** **MECHANICAL ENGINEERING**

*Associate Director of STEMEd Research, Assistant Teaching Professor in Engineering and Computing Education*

Dr. Jamie Gurganus, assistant teaching professor in the engineering and computing education program, has advanced UMBC's mission through exceptional teaching,

research, and leadership. As associate director of STEMEd Research, director of the Center for Integration of Research, Teaching, and Learning (CIRTL), and faculty fellow for the Alex. Brown Center for Entrepreneurship, she works to prepare engineers, educators, and communities from P-12 through post-graduate levels.

Her research and teaching focus on engineering identity, entrepreneurial and global competencies, work-integrated learning, and inclusive teaching practices. She has built international partnerships in Brazil, Portugal, Africa, Australia, the United Kingdom, and Germany, and collaborates widely within the industry on STEM education initiatives.

Gurganus has earned numerous honors, including a Presidential Award from the International Federation for Engineering Education Societies, an Erasmus Plus award for international collaboration, and the inaugural Diane M. Lee Teaching Award. A national leader in engineering education, she serves on CIRTL's board, has chaired programs for the American Society for Engineering Education, and co-founded Advancing Engineering Excellence in P-12 Engineering Education, helping to create the national P-12 Engineering Learning Framework.

Her passion for mentorship, inclusive innovation, and global engagement continues to strengthen UMBC and the broader engineering education community.



Read more about **Jamie Gurganus**.

[umbc.edu/stories/jamie-gurganus-outstanding-faculty-award](https://umbc.edu/stories/jamie-gurganus-outstanding-faculty-award)

## Outstanding Staff



**Michael Hunt '06, Ph.D. '25**  
**MATHEMATICS AND LANGUAGE,  
LITERACY, AND CULTURE**

*Director of the McNair Scholars Program*

Rev. Dr. Michael A. Hunt is an advocate, educator, and administrator dedicated to advancing equity in higher education.

A proud Baltimore native, he serves as director of UMBC's McNair Scholars Program, where he

leads efforts to prepare students from historically excluded groups for doctoral success. Under his leadership, the program has become a model of holistic support—integrating mentorship, academic preparation, and professional development—and launched the Retriever Graduate Preparation Network to expand access to graduate education.

Hunt earned his B.A. in applied mathematics from UMBC and a Master of Divinity from Emory University. He returned to UMBC to pursue his Ph.D. where his research advances the framework of Holistic Critical Mentoring. His work reimagines mentorship as a practice that affirms identity, fosters self-efficacy, and builds equitable academic cultures.

Before his current role, Hunt taught middle and high school mathematics and served in higher education administration. He and his wife, Ariel, co-founded A&M Hunt Consulting, LLC, partnering with institutions to create equitable strategies rooted in diversity, equity, and inclusion.

As a minister, scholar, and advocate, Hunt views education as both liberatory and communal—a calling that bridges intellectual inquiry, social justice, and human flourishing.

## MISSION & VISION



The Retriever Alumni community is 100,000-strong and represented by the UMBC Alumni Association, founded in 1970. The Association is led by a volunteer board of directors who support advancing the mission and vision of the

association and, by extension, UMBC, through their visibility as alumni leaders and active participants in the ongoing work of the board and its committees. Learn more at [alumni.umbc.edu](http://alumni.umbc.edu).

### Mission

The UMBC Alumni Association is a growing and global network, rooted in Maryland, consisting of all UMBC graduates from diverse backgrounds and specialties. The Association nurtures the individual and community foundations shaped at UMBC by strengthening connections between alumni, future alumni, friends, and partners. The Association champions the UMBC institution, initiatives, and values in order to continue building a lasting legacy of grit and greatness.

### Vision

The UMBC Alumni Association fosters lasting connections by increasing engagement and developing deeper relationships among the global UMBC community. We leverage technology and innovation to expand our reach and amplify the value of UMBC around the world. As ambassadors for UMBC, we stand up for justice and take part in civic dialogue to strengthen communities where we live, work, and serve.



## BOARD MEMBERS

*We would like to recognize the Alumni Association Board of Directors for their continued support of UMBC.*

Nate Dissmeyer '07\*  
President

Dann Malihom '10, M.A. '16  
Vice President, Engagement

Karen Woodard '90\*  
Vice President, Development

Karndeeep Singh '18, Ph.D. '24\*  
Vice President, Communications

Kevin Yang '07  
Immediate Past President

Zoscha Bomhardt '93\*  
Marian Saunders White '87\*  
Alumni Awards Committee, Co-Chairs

Brian Bailey '07  
Governance Committee, Chair

Lisa Nissley-Titman '01  
Membership Committee, Chair

\*Current board members who serve on the Alumni Awards committee

Monique Cephas '92  
Laura Howell '86

Kevin Johnson '15  
Matt Kalkbrenner '11

Nathaniel Kim '11  
Brian Koch '17

Julius Maina '08  
Vanita Murray '95

Jeremy Nevitt '08  
Kisha Parker '00

Nancy Chiles Shaffer '09  
Leslie Lyles Smith '91\*

Manpreet Suri '14, M.S. '15  
Anita Turner Wilkins '79

Bryan Wilkinson '09, Ph.D. '17  
Mariam Yaldram '20\*

Brigid Zuknick '09\*

*With special thanks to the following individual for serving on the awards selection committee with Alumni Awards Committee members:*

Dale Gough '70  
Founding Four representative



*Board members pictured with President Sheares Ashby and Provost Van Dulman at the 2024 Alumni Awards*

## ENDOWED SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS

Supporting the UMBC ALUMNI ENDOWED SCHOLARSHIP allows you to transform lives with a simple gift. With our combined help, students are able to pursue internships and research, enroll in enriching courses, and build confidence knowing their alumni community believes in them.

Three types of scholarships are awarded:

**General:** awarded to UMBC rising seniors who meet the criteria.

**Legacy:** awarded to children and grandchildren of UMBC graduates who meet the criteria.

**Alumni Association International (AA-I):** awarded to undergraduate MD residents; endowment established by the USM in honor of the group's enduring contributions.

This year, eight deserving students were awarded scholarships through this fund.

### General

**Jaspreet Gill '26**  
computer science

**Sneha Khati '26**  
public health

**Mercy Raji '26**  
computer science

**Stephanie Williams '26**  
social work and sociology

### Legacy

**Assata Hanif '26**  
geography and environmental studies

**Makayla Washington '28**  
english and media and communication studies

### Alumni Association International

**Nyssa Vilchis '27**  
political science

**Ryan Keem '26**  
biological science

Tonight, as we celebrate and honor our awardees, we also look to the future—supporting the next generation of Retrievers who will follow in their footsteps. The strength of UMBC is reflected in the accomplishments of those we honor tonight.

We are deeply grateful to the generous donors who contributed over the past year and leading up to this event in support of the Alumni Endowed Scholarship. With your continued generosity, we can transform the lives of students and reach our goal of \$75,000 for the endowment this year.

Make a gift at the registration table or online at





**Alumni  
Endowed  
Scholarship**  
– Established 1996 –

Since 1996, the UMBC Alumni Association has provided scholarships to outstanding students, awarding more than **\$285,000** and helping over **156** students graduate.

A few data points from FY25:



THE BOARD MADE  
**8 SCHOLARSHIP AWARDS**  
TOTALLING **\$23K**



200 DONORS MADE  
GIFTS TOTALLING **\$70,000**  
**TO THE AES**



MARKET VALUE OF  
THE ENDOWMENT  
**GREW BY 21%** OVER  
THE LAST YEAR



THE ALUMNI BOARD REACHED  
THEIR FUNDRAISING GOAL OF  
RAISING THE VALUE OF THE  
**ENDOWMENT TO \$500K**



*Scholarship Recipients with Board Members at the 2024 Alumni Awards*

## PAST AWARD RECIPIENTS

The alumni, faculty, and staff who have received previous awards represent a distinguished group who exemplify grit and greatness in their field, their service to UMBC, and in their personal lives. Since 1988, awardees have been acknowledged in these categories: Alumni Community Leadership, Distinguished Graduate of the Year, Distinguished Service, Outstanding Graduate Engineering and Technology, Outstanding Graduate Humanities, Outstanding Graduate Natural and Mathematical Sciences, Outstanding Graduate Social and Behavioral Sciences, Outstanding Graduate Visual and Performing Arts, Outstanding Faculty, Outstanding Staff, Outstanding Graduate Social Work, Volunteer of the Year, and Young Alumni Rising Star.

To read more about past alumni award recipients, please visit [alumni.umbc.edu/alumniawards](https://alumni.umbc.edu/alumniawards).



**Learn more about past alumni award recipients**



## Retrievers Connect: Your UMBC Networking Platform

Retrievers Connect is UMBC's official online networking platform designed to foster professional connections, mentorship, and collaboration among members of the UMBC community. Established in 2021, the platform now supports a growing network of more than 5,500 active alumni and student users.

Retrievers Connect is open to all members of the UMBC community, including alumni, students, faculty, staff, and invited friends and partners. The platform enables users to seek and offer career advice, engage in industry and affinity groups, participate in community discussions, and connect by region or professional field. Alumni can connect with one another to share expertise and opportunities, while students can reach out to alumni for mentorship and career guidance.

Whether you're looking to offer or receive career advice, share job or internship opportunities, or connect with Retrievers by region or industry, Retrievers Connect is your gateway to the UMBC professional community.

For more information or to join the platform, visit [retrieversconnect.umbc.edu](https://retrieversconnect.umbc.edu) or contact [retrieversconnect@umbc.edu](mailto:retrieversconnect@umbc.edu)

**Learn more about Retrievers Connect and connect with fellow Retrievers**



## YOUR GIFT MATTERS.

What truly sets UMBC apart is how we do what we do.

**Inclusive excellence** is not just something we preach. It's ingrained in our everyday lives, as we work to advance knowledge, economic prosperity, and social justice by welcoming and inspiring inquisitive minds from all backgrounds. We continue to do amazing work because of this philosophy and because of the ongoing support of our biggest supporters: donors like you. Your generosity helps:

- Ease financial burdens and enhance equitable student access
- Support exceptional faculty who serve, inspire, and discover
- Transform spaces that enable learning and collaboration
- Advance high-impact teaching, research, and outreach activities

Your philanthropic investment is not just supporting a university; it is empowering **President Valerie Sheares Ashby's** bold vision for the future, enabling our students to achieve their dreams, and allowing our faculty to continue their world-class work.

UMBC will continue to grow and thrive with your ongoing support. Thank you!



**GIVING.UMBC.EDU**

## GIVING SOCIETIES

### **Hilltop Society**

The Hilltop Society is UMBC's way of honoring our most ardent advocates: Donors at the leadership-giving level who have generously donated \$1,000 or more in a fiscal year. Hilltop members make a significant impact on the university, establishing scholarships, funding research, and advancing the UMBC mission.

"My wife, **Katelyn Niu '05**, biochemistry, and I established an endowed scholarship in 2014 to support undergraduate students. Katelyn and I were fortunate to receive scholarships at UMBC. We are giving back so students who come after us can continue to have the same extraordinary experience that shaped our future." - **Kevin Yang '07**, computer science



Please consider joining the Hilltop Society, a special group that recognizes our most dedicated supporters and honors their commitment to both our students and the future of UMBC.

### **1966 Society**

Did you know that there is an easy way for ANYONE to **create a meaningful UMBC legacy**? The 1966 Society recognizes generous alumni, faculty, staff, and friends who have included the university in their wills and estate plans.


"One does not need to be wealthy to create a meaningful legacy." - **Sharon Johnson**, retired Meyerhoff Scholars Program staff

We invite you to consider joining Sharon as a member of our 1966 Society and create your own UMBC legacy.



### **Retriever Loyal**

Retriever Loyal celebrates and recognizes alumni, parents, faculty, staff, and friends whose consistent giving and enthusiastic commitment set an example, inspire others, and make an impact on the UMBC community. Giving, at all levels, in two or more consecutive fiscal years to any UMBC fund qualifies a donor for Retriever Loyal membership.



UMBC.  
alumni  
ASSOCIATION

[ALUMNI.UMBC.EDU](http://ALUMNI.UMBC.EDU)